

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9-13 remain pending in this application. Claims 3 and 11 have been amended and claim 4 has been canceled. Support for these amendments may be found, for example, in FIGS. 22 and 23 and the corresponding portions of the disclosure in the specification pertaining to these figures.

Claims 2-4, 6, 9 and 11 stand rejected as anticipated by Pisharodi, while claims 5, 10, 12 and 13 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on Pisharodi by itself or in view of secondary references. These rejections are respectfully traversed in light of the amendments above.

The claims now require the upper and lower surfaces to have a toothed central extent and an untoothed lateral extent located on an edge of the central extent in a coronal plane. That is, the teeth of the claimed central extent do not cover the entirety of the upper or lower surface. By contrast, the teeth or ridges 50 disclosed in Pisharodi cover the entire upper and lower surfaces, as shown in FIGS. 3-6. There is no hint whatever in Pisharodi of any reason to have the claimed untoothed lateral extents. Although col. 4, lines 11-16, of Pisharodi states that the sides 23 and 25 need not be provided with serrations 50, it also indicates that the "biting" function performed by serrations 50 may be provided by multiple steps on the sides of the sides 23 and 25 or by knurling the surfaces of the sides. This passage of Pisharodi fails to disclose the possibility of using an upper or lower surface that is partially toothed and partially untoothed as claimed. What the Examiner correlates in Pisharodi to the claimed lateral extent, the "left curved portion of element 24," is shown in Pisharodi to carry ribs to its edge. Finally, what the Examiner refers to FIGS. 1 and 2 in Pisharodi as showing the claimed "lateral extent having an incline relative to a transverse plane" must simply be one of the sides 22, 24, neither of which would be considered by a person of ordinary skill in the art to be part of either the upper or lower surface of the cover plates in the context of the invention as claimed since they do not lie between a toothed central extent and the lateral edges of the cover plate as claimed. Accordingly, Pisharodi does not anticipate claims 2, 3, 6, 9 and 11, and the rejection should be withdrawn.

The obviousness rejections all rely on the Examiner's reading of Pisharodi in support of the anticipation rejections and should be withdrawn because Pisharodi does not provide the teachings for which it is cited.

In view of the above, early action allowing claims 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9-13 is solicited.

In the event the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. **246472008500**.

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